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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000318

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, AND
AF/C
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU
PARIS FOR KANEDA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#) [CD](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: "DARFUR PARTNERS GROUP" DISCUSS SUDAN CONSORTIUM,
CHAD, AND PEACE PROCESS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 00178

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 00297

KHARTOUM 00000318 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) At a recent meeting of the Darfur Partners Group in Khartoum, Western Ambassadors discussed the possibility of adding sessions on Darfur and the Sudan-Chad conflict to the agenda for the Sudan Consortium tentatively scheduled for April in Paris. The UN/AU mediation team provided an update on the Darfur peace process, noting a supposed recent thaw in JEM and Abdulwahid al Nur's interactions with the mediation team. The UN/AU may announce the appointment of a chief mediator during an upcoming meeting of the Tripoli Format in Geneva and solicit ideas for using the Sudan Consortium to advance the peace process on Darfur. While Post recommends high-level U.S. attendance at the Consortium, the USG should move to develop a position on how the Consortium should be structured and engage with other donors to build consensus on realistic outcomes for the meeting. End summary.

Sudan Consortium: Pledging, Darfur, and Chad?

[1](#)2. (SBU) A recent meeting of the Darfur Partners Group--attended by representatives from the U.S., UK, France, EU, Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, the UN, and the AU--provided an opportunity to discuss the intersection of two upcoming high-level fora on Sudan: a meeting of the Tripoli Format to discuss the Darfur peace process scheduled for March 18 in Geneva and the Sudan Consortium scheduled for April in Paris. UN Humanitarian Coordinator Ameerah Haq is engaging the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on the possible inclusion of a session on the Darfur conflict on the margins of the Sudan Consortium, according to UK Ambassador Rosalind Marsden. Haq is also using her discussions with the NCP and the SPLM to gauge their reaction to a UN/World Bank draft paper outlining linkages between progress in the Darfur peace process and early recovery/reconstruction activities in the

region, which was endorsed by donors in late February.

¶3. (SBU) While Marsden reported that the NCP is expecting "significant pledges" at the Consortium--for projects in both Northern and Southern Sudan--CDA Fernandez called on the donor community to take a holistic approach. "The NCP cannot obstruct UNAMID deployment and then ask the international community for an infusion of funds for Northern Sudan," he explained. (Note: At a meeting with S/E Williamson in Khartoum on February 25, Haq said that the NCP is receptive to a discussion on Darfur at the Consortium but only if it is not used as a vehicle to "beat up on Sudan." End note.)

¶4. (C) French Ambassador Christine Robichon suggested that discussion of the situation in Chad would also be an appropriate side topic for the Consortium, given its impact on Darfur and the potential for a new insurgent attack on N'djamena derailing high-level consultations on Sudan. She indicated that the French Government is developing a proposal on how to structure such a discussion on Chad but said "it is too early to know" what form it will take. "A new offensive could happen quite quickly," said Robichon. Characterizing Deby's overthrow as "unacceptable," she said she has "anticipated" a new attack in meetings with NCP officials. (Note: Per Ref. A, France did not discuss the February offensive against Deby with the NCP until Deby's hold on power was assured. End note.)

¶5. (C) Umberto Tavalato, political advisor to EU Special Envoy for Sudan (and political director of EUFOR) Torben Brylle, commented that Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie recently claimed that the NCP is open to normalizing relations with Chad but only through bilateral discussions and not through AU mediation. (Note: Per Ref. B, Nafie made similar remarks in a recent meeting with S/E Williamson. End note.) CDA Fernandez remarked that Sudan fears a linkage between EUFOR and UNAMID, and Tavalato responded that the EU

KHARTOUM 00000318 002.2 OF 003

is attempting to explain "what EUFOR will and will not do" in its discussions with the Sudanese Government.

Challenges to Peace Process...

¶6. (SBU) According to UN/AU Joint Mediation Support Team Political Director Muin Shrim, Eliasson's most recent briefing for the UN Security Council was a frank assessment of the challenges confronting the mediation. "It will be difficult to get any significant rebel movement into the process in the next two to three months," said Shrim. However, at present, the JMST has determined that only one of Darfur's rebel movements--the faction led by Ahmed Abdulshafie--now rejects the UN/AU process outright.

...But Some Rebels Come in from the Cold

¶7. (SBU) Khalil Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), however, has "come out of the cold," said Shrim, and is willing to participate in working-level dialogue with the JMST on a cessation of hostilities. The JMST is also considering using a discussion of a cessation of hostilities to "sound out" rebel leaders on a possible initiative to re-unify the factions of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). Following a meeting between UN Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson and SLM faction leader Abdulwahid al Nur in Paris at the end of January, the JMST also plans to engage in direct discussions with SLM field commanders to provide updates on UNAMID deployment, one of Abdulwahid's principal demands for participation in peace negotiations.

Tripoli Format Meeting in Geneva

¶8. (C) A meeting of the "Tripoli Format" is scheduled for March 18 in Geneva, said AU Chief Mediator Sam Ibok, who noted that the JMST may not invite Sudan. He added that Eliasson and Salim hope to announce the appointment of a UN/AU chief mediator at the Geneva meeting as well as discuss how the Sudan Consortium can be used to advance the peace process. (Note: While the JMST argues that inviting Sudan to a meeting of the Tripoli Format will antagonize some rebel groups, which will complain that they are not represented, an international forum that includes Chad and not Sudan at this juncture is likely to exacerbate tensions. With regard to the chief mediator, Mohammed Sahnoun, a former Algerian Ambassador to Washington and UN SRSG for Somalia who was involved in the early stages of the Abuja process, is the presumptive candidate. However, this information is sensitive pending his final agreement to join the mediation effort. End note.)

UN/AU Wary of New SPLM Initiative

¶9. (SBU) Calling the appointment of Abdulaziz Hilou as the SPLM's point man on a Darfur a "good sign," Ibok explained that the UN/AU had not yet agreed with the SPLM on the "second phase" of their involvement in the Darfur peace process or the utility of a "Juba Two" as proposed by some members of the SPLM. Ibok acknowledged that the UN/AU fear that a drawn-out process in Southern Sudan will "hold the mediation hostage." Some representatives of minor rebel factions have remained in Juba since the conclusion of the last SPLM-organized conference because the NCP has denied flight clearances to return them to Darfur. (Note: The SPLM is dependent on the UN/AU to facilitate transportation for the rebel movements to and from Juba. End note.)

Comment

¶10. (SBU) Adding discussions of Chad and Darfur to the Sudan Consortium agenda, particularly in the absence of a developed strategy for the Darfur peace process (or for dealing with

KHARTOUM 00000318 003.2 OF 003

the ongoing political tumult in Chad), may distract participants from the focus of the Consortium, as the rightly SPLM fears. While Post recommends high-level U.S. attendance at the Consortium, the USG should move to develop a position on how the Consortium should be structured and engage with other donors to build consensus on realistic outcomes for the meeting. End comment.

¶11. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
FERNANDEZ